THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some specific areas of collaboration include:

(i) Distribution through the Tobacco Board of pure seeds produced by CTRI to commercial nurseries and growers;

(ii) Distribution to FCV tobacco growers of pure and healthy seedlings produced in CTRI farms;

(iii) Dissemination by the Tobacco Board of the latest research findings of CTRI to growers by conducting training programmes, video shows, study tours and on farm trials.

(c) These extension activities benefit the farmer by providing seeds/seedling of high yeilding disease resistant varieties of FCV/burley tobacco, imparting training and exposure to latest research findings in the area of tobacco cultivation.

Threat Posted by Sri Lanka to Indian in European Tea Market

5116. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Lanka is posing a seritus threat to India in the European tea market; and

(b) if so, what steps have been or are being taken to meet this threat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Sri Lanka is a traditional competitor of India in the international tea market. There is, however, no serious threat to the Indian tea from Sri Lanka in the European market;

In order to improve our market share in Europe, promotional capaigns for Indian tea are undertaken from time to time through Tea Board's offices at London and Brussels. Steps taken in this direction include participation in trade fairs|exhibitions; media capaign to increase consumer awareness towards various unique characteristics of Indian tea; media campaign to popularise Indian tea through Tea Board marketing symbol; and support to various foreign brands containing Indian tea. Tea Board have also undertaken brand promotion scheme to popularise classic Indian tea abroad and also have launched a Darjeeling and Assam Logo campaign in U. K.

The Govt. have also token the following measures to facilitate tea exports:-

(i) FOB sale of tea in London auctions has been allowed whereby exporters do not have to physically shift the teas to London before the actions as hitherto.

(ii) System of CIF off shore sale of Indian tea at London actions has also been approved which covers also the Europeon market.

Inclusion of Tobacco in thrust Area for Export Promotion

5117. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco will be included in the thrust area for export promotion;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) how Government propose to obtain an increasing share of the growing overseas market for tobacco?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) Governmen attaches special importance to the growth of export of agricultural commodities including tobacco. Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of tobacco and tobacco products include, inter-alia, re-orientation of production of tobacco to meet changing international needs, enhancement of quality and productivity levels, monitoring and strict control of pesticides residues, aligning grading to international grading standards and permitting imports for product development.

Coffee growing potential in the Country

5118. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a significant coffee growing potential in the country, beyond the traditional areas;

(b) whether the Coffee Board has renewed efforts to contact State Government like the Government of Andhra Prodesh to increase coffee cultivation; and

(c) detatils of any fresh initiactive taken by Coffee Board to expand area of coffee cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Coffee Board has been pursuing with various State Govts. to increase the area under coffee in their respective States. The Government of Andhra Pradesh was approached in 1976-77 in this regard. A target of 16,000 hec. expansion programme was envisaged for Andhra Pradesh and a total area of 10,404 hec has been brought under coffee plantation till date.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Coffee Board to expand coffee cultivation in the country:—

(1) The Board has conducted a detailed INSITU surveys to identify suitable areas for coffee plantation in the non-traditional States.

(2) The Board has set up Research and Extension Centre and Coffee Demonstration Farm to support coffee cultivation programme.

(3) Coffee Board extends required support and information for formulation of coffee projects and marketing in the States.

(4) The extension wing of the Board organises visits to coffee growing areas to give advice and help to the coffee cultivators.

(5) Coffee Board also monitors with the State Governments the progress of coffee cultivation in their states.

Alternative Scheme for IPRS

5119. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering an alternative scheme to the International Price Replenishment Scheme (IPRS);

(b) if so, the Broad features of the alternative scheme;

(c) whether Government have at any stage made an assessment of the working of the existing IPRS; if so, its outcome and what were the flaws noticed as a result thereof; and

(d) how far it helped in controlling the price fluctuation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A new Scheme called the Engineering Products Export (Replenishment of Iron and Steel